



File Code: 1950

Date: February 4, 2014

Dear Interested Party:

I want to thank you for attending the public scoping meeting for the Lower Joseph Creek project on January 30 in Enterprise. This meeting, which was co-hosted by Wallowa County and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, was intended to share with the public the forest restoration proposal that we are making for this project area.

I want to take this opportunity to provide follow up information about how to provide scoping input and highlight some of the topics that came up during this meeting.

We are in the 30-day scoping period that began January 9, 2014, with the publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register. The purpose of this scoping period is to gather public input about our proposal, so that we can discover all of the issues that people may have with this project or the project area. The issues are then used by the planning team to help guide their analysis, including developing alternatives to the proposed action.

You can provide scoping input in several ways:

By mail: John Laurence, Forest Supervisor, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
c/o Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy
72510 Coyote Road
Pendleton, OR 97801

By email: comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman@fs.fed.us

By fax: (541) 278-3730
c/o Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy

For further information contact: Ayn Shlisky, Eastside Restoration Strategy Team Lead, Umatilla National Forest, 72510 Coyote Rd., Pendleton, OR 97801; phone (541) 278-3762. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Project URL: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=43379



I would like to highlight a couple topics that generated some good questions and discussion during the public meeting last Thursday. The first has to do with Access and Travel Management and how the Lower Joseph Creek Project is going to analyze and manage the road system within that planning area, and the second is the inclusion of private and other than US Forest Service land in the Watershed Analysis Boundary shown on the maps.

1. There will be a roads assessment included in the analysis for the Lower Joseph Project. The following strategy was developed in coordination with the Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Team, Wallowa County, and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.
 - Wallowa County has completed an inventory of all open and closed roads within the watershed. We will use this inventory as the existing condition.
 - We recognize that past project-level decisions included decisions to close some roads, but a few of these roads in fact remain open to this day. This difference between past decisions and current conditions can be confusing. In cooperation with Wallowa County, we intend to prepare a complete roads analysis with this project analysis, including those roads previously scheduled to be closed. This may result in a new decision to leave these roads open, to close some or all of these roads, or to close other roads.
 - The roads analysis will develop a road system that allows land management, provides public access, meets existing Land and Resource Management Plan standards, meets our obligation to protect threatened and endangered fish species, and minimizes direct impacts on streams and water quality. We are interested in ensuring public access for recreation, firewood gathering, and the myriad of other public uses of your National Forest.
 - The proposed action does include some new roads in order to treat forest stands and facilitate other restoration work.
2. There is private land within the Lower Joseph Creek analysis area, because we conduct our analysis on watershed boundaries. This is because working at this scale allows us to consider the effects of our actions in the context of the surrounding landscape. The important thing to know is that there is no intent to plan or conduct work on lands not managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Sincerely,



JOHN LAURENCE
Forest Supervisor